

Legal Notice

Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment for an Operating Permit for Venture Stone LLC

Venture Stone LLC has filed an application with the Department of Environmental Quality for a multiple quarry Operating Permit under the Metal Mine Reclamation Act. The Operating Permit would authorize the quarrying of rock at the following five sites:

1. Sections 20, 21, 28, and 29, Township 18 North, Range 4 East
2. Sections 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29, Township 18 North, Range 3 East
3. Sections 20, 28, 29, 30 and 32, Township 18 North, Range 4 East
4. Sections 33 and 34, Township 18 North, Range 4 East, and Sections 3 and 4, Township 17 North, Range 4 East.
5. Section 32, Township 18 North, Range 6 East, and Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, 18 and 19, Township 17 North, Range 6 East.

Sites 1 through 4 are about 13 miles south of Great Falls and about 40 miles east of Cascade. Site 5 is about ten miles south of Belt. Additionally, the Operating Permit would authorize stone processing at an existing building at 795 Ulm Vaughn Road about four miles southeast of Vaughn. All sites are on private property in Cascade County.

The Operating Permit would cover a total of 10,012 acres, of which approximately 9,550 acres would be disturbed over the next ten years.

Sandstone rocks laying on the surface would be removed with hand tools or with an excavator or backhoe. Depressions up to a foot in depth would be left. The rock would be transported to a palleting/staging area with a skid-steer loader. The rock would be used for various masonry purposes.

The proposed operation has been reviewed for compliance with a Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment (SPEA) for a General Quarry Operating Permit published by the DEQ in February 2004. DEQ has determined that this operation meets all the requirements listed in the SPEA except that the proposed sites would have more than five acres disturbed and unreclaimed at any one time.

The Draft EA addresses issues and concerns raised during public involvement and from agency scoping. DEQ must decide whether to approve the Operating Permit as proposed, deny the request for an Operating Permit, or approve the Operating Permit with modifications. DEQ has identified approving the mining operation as proposed as the preferred alternative. This is not a final decision. This conclusion may change based on comments received from the public on the Draft EA, new information, or new analysis that may be needed in preparing the Final EA.

Copies of the application can be reviewed by the public at DEQ offices at 1520 E. 6th Ave., in Helena, MT. Please submit comments or questions on the proposal and EA by February 10, 2017. For information on the project and to submit comments on the proposal, contact:

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The Draft EA will also be posted on the DEQ web page: www.deq.mt.gov.
